GALLERY 26

CONTEMPORARY ART IN CLEVELAND COLLECTIONS

A museum has an obligation, to the public and to history, to acquire and exhibit art that it is certain is authentic, significant, and "beautiful." In dealing with modern art, however, obvious problems present themselves. The professional staff must be thoroughly familiar with the few persistent historical "languages" of art as well as the many modern "dialects" in order to judge new variations and additions to these as they occur. They must be willing to commit themselves to a work when they are convinced of its validity and importance *as art*; but they must never commit themselves until that moment. If they move impetuously in the hope of guessing well early, they lack responsibility and may be serving the market rather than art. Yet, if they wait for history to do the judging, they abdicate their position as one of the agents responsible for contributing to that judgment. A refusal to deal with new forms may even prejudice their judgments of traditional art. The inevitable conclusion seems to be that no matter how astute their judgments, they will always trail well behind new developments in the arts. And so one part of the public will impatiently accuse the museum of being stodgy, "fuddy-duddy," and involved with art that is "old hat;" while another group will suspiciously insist that the museum is moving too quickly, is acting irresponsibly, and may even lack dignity. The only possible answers to such attitudes are: first, that true art is never "old hat," and second, that the judgment of history is made up of precisely the accumulated judgments of critics, art historians, curators, and other qualified people seriously interested in art. A responsible museum then has no choice but to acquire works that have convinced its professional staff of their validity as art, and not to acquire any works that have not convinced them.

Private collectors, on the other hand, can act more freely. They need only account to themselves; and thus they are free to indulge personal whims. They can also refuse to consider important kinds of art on the same personal grounds. The private collection, therefore, is usually more one sided than the museum collection, reflecting the personal taste of the collector.

An ideal arrangement occurs when private collectors, who can be more daring, and the museum which must be more conservative, can work together side by side and happily compliment one another. Frequently as the collector's more astute acquisitions assume an honored place in the history of modern art, they find their way into the collections of the museum. Many of the great public collections of modern art in this country have benefited in this way. The Cleveland Museum of Art, for example, was enormously enriched by the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings originally in the collection of Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. When such a relationship is founded on candor, integrity, and mutual respect, it can only benefit both the private collector and ultimately the general public.

In order to see what private collectors in this area have been collecting, this small, less than exhaustive, exhibition has been arranged. In some instances only a sample of the collector's recent acquisitions has been selected. In other cases, works which have been in the collection for some time were selected since they had not been exhibited before. Many collections are not represented at all. Some of these have had representation in past shows, others, it is hoped, will appear in future exhibitions. In spite of the limitations and problems which are unavoidable in any such exhibition, it is always rewarding to see evidence of the growth of the collections and the development of interest in, and knowledge of, this field. Above all, however, it is just good to see the works of art.

J. AGAM

"Untitled"
Wood and metal ca. 1962

Lent by Mrs. Kenneth B. Wick

JULIUS BISSIER

"Dunkle Blüte"
Water color 1962

Lent by Lockwood Thompson

ALEXANDER CALDER

"Abstraction"
Gouache 1961

Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Ralph I. Fried

JIMMY ERNST

"Here and Now"
Oil 1963

Lent by Frank H. Porter

HELEN FRANKENTHALER

"Summer View"
Oil on canvas 1963

Lent by Louis D. Kacalieff M.D.

EDWARD HIGGINS

"Untitled"
Steel 1960

Lent by Katherine W. Merkel

RICHARD HUNT

"Multi Pedal Peregrination"
Steel 1962

Lent by Katherine W. Merkel

ASGER JORN

"Midsummer Night's Dream"
Collage 1964

Lent by Frank H. Porter

JOHN KOENIG

"Wasserman von Remia"
Oil 1958

"Japan"
Collage 1963

Lent by Ann Koblitz

LUCEBERT

"Nymphenspiel"
Oil 1960

Lent by Mrs. Gordon D. Meals

LEN LYE

"Fountain"
Metal 1962

Lent by Mr. Kenneth B. Wick

DAVID MANZUR

"Marina 2"
Oil ca. 1964

Lent by Lockwood Thompson

AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

"Caryatid"
Water color and pencil on paper 1918

Lent by Edward A. Hinkle

"Standing Nude Leaning Forward"
Pencil on paper ca. 1914

Lent by Barnett B. Segelin

LASZLO MOHOLY NAGY

"Ch. Feb. II"
Oil on canvas 1943

Lent by Frank H. Porter

CARL MORRIS

"Calm Horizon"
Oil on canvas 1955

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Hurley

HILDA MORRIS

"Young Horse"
Bronze ca. 1955

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Hurley

ROBERT MOTHERWELL

"Automatic Image No. II"
Oil on paper 1963

Lent by Louis D. Kacalieff M.D.

REGINALD POLLACK

"Red Wall"
Oil on canvas 1959

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew S. Dempsey

C. S. PRICE

"Owl"
Oil on paper ca. 1947

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Hurley

DAVID SIQUEIROS

"Figure of a Man"
Oil

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Oscar H. Steiner

THOMAS STOKES

"Untitled"
Oil 1963

Lent by Lockwood Thompson